

## **EXHIBIT B**



Chelsea Armann  
Assistant Principal, Payne School

December 15, 2020

Honorable William G. Young  
United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts

Dear Judge Young,

I am writing this letter in support of Veronica Lynn Zea, who pled guilty to charges of conspiracy to commit cyberstalking and conspiracy to obstruct justice in October of this year. To provide a little background, my name is Chelsea Zea Armann, and I am Veronica's first cousin. I have spent my entire career in the school district I attended as a child, first as a middle school teacher, and now as an assistant principal at Payne Elementary School.

Veronica, or Ronnie as we call her, and I have been close for her entire life. I was in middle school when she was born, so she has always felt like a little sister to me. It was a pleasure to watch her grow up as we spent almost all holidays, birthdays, and many other family occasions together with our large extended family. Her parents are my godparents--I joke that she and her sister are my "godsisters." She is the trusted family member I turn to when I need a house and pet sitter when my family and I go on vacation; she babysat my two sons, Gabe (6) and Benji (2) frequently, until she got a full-time job. She was supposed to give them swim lessons this summer, but could not due to the pandemic. Ronnie is someone who is near and dear to my heart, and if writing this letter can in any way help her, I am genuinely pleased to do so.

I imagine you get countless letters like this protesting that the writers' friends and family members were innocent and wrongly accused. Ronnie's case is different because I am not here to proclaim her innocence. I've spent a good deal of time talking with her about what happened. She and I and the rest of our family are aware

that what she did was wrong. When I first heard her story, I didn't even need to ask her any questions to be able to figure out what must have happened. Ronnie has always been someone who wants to help and make others happy. Since she was a child, she spent time volunteering and helping others through her Girl Scout troop (she was a Girl Scout for 10 years) and with Sunday Friends, a nonprofit that works to break the cycle of poverty. In high school, she worked with several volunteer groups, like Tino Cancer Club (one of our aunts had lymphoma). Even after she graduated high school, she returned to help her mom with PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association) at school while her sister was still attending. I can't ever recall a time when Ronnie got in trouble at school or at home for breaking rules. While I don't especially like the phrase, she really was never anything but a "good girl." After she graduated college, she moved back home and lived with her parents to save money. I tried to get her to move into the mother-in-law quarters attached to our house, since I knew she would be a great tenant, but she declined, saying she wanted to stay with her mom and dad while her sister was away at college. All of the stories I can think of about her are about her kindness and her calm demeanor. I honestly can't think of a single time when I saw her being rude to family members, except maybe for some spats with her little sister! For the longest time, until she had a knee injury, she wanted to pursue a career in law enforcement, even perhaps join the FBI one day, because of her desire to help people. She even chose to go to college in Washington, DC so that she could learn about our government firsthand. She was devastated when her knee injury meant she would be unable to pass the physical test to get into the police academy. She found a compromise for her first job working in the cyber security department at eBay.

Thinking about all of this and what I know about her, I can easily see how Ronnie, in her first professional job post college, would have trusted and followed the directions of her work superiors. She would have had no reason and little inclination to do otherwise. If her bosses told her what she had been instructed to do was legal in California, I know she would have trusted them and completed her tasks. Not to say

that she is gullible, but rather that her naïveté and trusting nature had a hand in getting her into the current situation. I know that Ronnie questioned some of the suspicious actions assigned to her, but I also know that she was in a position in her department as an inexperienced member, a young female in a male dominated group, where she felt she didn't have anyone she felt she could turn to. Indeed, she was always private about her job - the most I ever knew was that she worked in security for eBay. She wouldn't go into more detail about it - she took her job and its confidentiality requirements seriously. Again, this is not to excuse her actions, but to provide reasons why I understand how she got into such a conundrum.

Certainly I was surprised and disappointed when Ronnie told me her story. I was even more shocked to find out that there is the possibility that she could serve jail time. Knowing what kind of person Ronnie is - kind, intelligent, trusting, funny, caring, loyal, dependable - it would be a tragedy for her to have to follow that path. I am certain that Ronnie understands her role in what happened at eBay and how her personality led her into that situation; I am even more certain that she is remorseful and regrets what she did. Not because of the prospect of consequences she has to face, but because of the hurt and fear she caused other people. She is normally such an empathetic, sensitive person, that I know what she regrets the most is how others' lives were negatively affected. I am sure it must be a great relief to her that no one was seriously or physically harmed.

Veronica Zea, my cousin, is a wonderful person. I know she has done some extensive self-reflection and had several realizations about herself. She knows her behavior was wrong and weak-willed, but she is determined to change that part of herself. I have faith that she is being honest and true about this. She has grown and learned from her experiences, and I believe she has become a stronger person because of it. I sincerely and honestly believe Ronnie will never engage in any activity like this ever again.

Please feel free to contact me if you need any additional information. I am happy to support Ronnie in any way I can.

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PAYNE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL • 3750 GLEASON AVENUE • SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA 95130  
(408) 874-3700 • FAX (408) 241-4932

Sincerely,



Chelsea Zea Armann

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